



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Suspension of BBC Programming in Tajikistan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 19, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to thank the OSCE Center in Dushanbe for its January 13 spot report on the suspension of BBC Radio programming in Tajikistan. According to that report, the Tajik Committee for TV and Radio Broadcasting suspended BBC radio programming in FM frequencies as of January 11 because the company had not registered with the Tajik Justice Ministry. Unfortunately, BBC was given very little notice about the need to re-register.

The United States is aware that the Head of the Tajik Committee for TV and Radio Broadcasting denied any political motivations behind the suspension. We hope that this is indeed the case, and that the suspension of BBC programming is only temporary and due merely to a bureaucratic oversight.

We note Tajikistan, as a participating State, has accepted the 1991 Moscow Document that states "...independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms." The United States calls on Tajikistan to continue its efforts to take all necessary steps to ensure the basic conditions for free and independent media.

With a Tajik presidential election scheduled for the end of 2006, it is crucial that independent media be allowed to operate unhindered in Tajikistan well in advance of election day in order for the election to meet OSCE standards.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.